

26 JUL 1978

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

FROM : John F. Blake  
Deputy Director for Administration

SUBJECT : Applicant Processing Time

REFERENCE : Memo for DDA fr DCI dtd 17 July 78,  
same subject

1. Action Requested: None; for information only.

2. The reference expresses your continuing concern about the time it takes to process an applicant for Agency employment. In paragraph 2a you suggest that we "establish a greatly reduced norm such as 60 days in which to respond to an applicant as to whether we wish to employ him." We have checked our statistics for the last 18 months and can report that it takes an average of 50 days from the time a recruiter receives a completed application until an office decides whether it wishes to hire the applicant.

3. The time it takes for a decision not to hire an applicant is longer (91 days). It is obvious from this contrast in statistics that the offices quickly recognize the best candidates and put them in process as rapidly as possible. All applicant files are initially referred to one office of possible interest. In addition, applications are advertised in "New Applicant File Acquisitions" lists, which are continuously circulated to some 90 offices in the Agency (an example is attached). Very often, no interest is generated from either approach. If the Office of Personnel still feels the applicant has good qualifications, the file will be referred to another Agency component for review. This may happen three or four times before all possibilities have been exhausted. Only then is an applicant "rejected" by the Agency. The process does take time, but we believe it is both effective and fair. In a surprising number of cases, a second, third, or even fourth component may express interest in an applicant and ultimately put the individual in process. In those cases where a reject letter is sent,

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the Agency can honestly say to the applicant, his Congressman, or his lawyer that we have thoroughly reviewed the individual's qualifications in light of Agency requirements and have been unable to come up with a suitable employment opportunity.

4. We are also aware that we are dealing with a perception problem in this area. Applicants think of processing time as beginning when they first inquire about jobs with the Agency and ending when they enter on duty. Looked at from that viewpoint, the period is lengthy. What applicants frequently forget is that they are the cause of much of the delay. For example: The person who sends in an employment inquiry receives a letter and an employment fact sheet from the Agency. If he or she returns a resume that meets our requirements, the individual is interviewed by a recruiter. If the interview is favorable, the candidate is given an Agency application to fill out. Rarely is an application returned in less than 21 days. Frequently it is not complete; we must go back and ask for full addresses of references, more information about drug usage, and the like. This may take another two weeks. Getting applicants into Washington for appointments is also difficult and time-consuming. Many, particularly students, are difficult to contact. After repeated unsuccessful phone calls, we send out mailgrams asking them to call us. Applicants also delay because of exams, term papers, inability to get away from work, etc. Finally, even when individuals are fully cleared, there are often substantial time delays prior to EOD because they need to sell their houses, wait until their children finish school, give adequate notice to their employers, and other such reasons.

5. You also suggested the possibility of using a retainer fee arrangement with some applicants pending completion of the clearance process. The concept is a good one. We used it selectively some years ago and are re-exploring the idea with representatives of NFAC and DDS&T. There are two areas of concern here. One has to do with substantive unclassified research vs. "make work." The other involves dealing with the complications that can arise when such an individual is not ultimately approved for Agency employment.

6. You asked us to consider making special provisions to decide whether we want Graduate Fellows (formerly known as Summer Interns) to come back for career employment. This Program is administered centrally by the Office of Personnel's Coordinator for Student Trainee Programs. It is one of his basic responsibilities to see that those Graduate Fellows who express a career interest in the Agency are fully considered for permanent staff employment. The Graduate Fellows formally communicate

employment interest via their final Program critiques. The Coordinator, meantime, has been in touch with the using offices throughout the summer session and has been receiving periodic assessments of the abilities the students are demonstrating. If there is mutuality of interest, the Coordinator brings the Graduate Fellow and the using component together to discuss permanent employment. Opportunities outside of a Graduate Fellow's using office are also explored. It is not at all unusual to find former Fellows in a CT class. In the January 1978 class, there were two. In the July 1978 class, there are also two. About 22% of our Graduate Fellows convert to permanent staff employment. We feel this to be an excellent return on our investment in the Program.

/s/ John F. Blake

John F. Blake

Attachment

Dist:

- 0 - Add
- 1 - DDCI
- 1 - ER
- 2 - DDA
- 1 - DD/Pers/R&P
- 1 - D/Pers Subject File
- 1 - D/Pers Chrono (w/held)

Originator:

Director of Personnel

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